

“Our job is to  
make sure you  
get your  
tax dollars’ worth –  
and more.”

– CAROL ANN WEHLE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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operation of pumping stations (diesel fuel costs alone exceeded \$4 million), and high-velocity water flows caused some canal bank erosion and structure damages.

Those repairs are ongoing, along with our multi-year plan to update and improve the overall water management system. Overhauls were completed on five pumping stations and 22 water control structures. In Miami-Dade County, the final component of a series of facility upgrades has been completed in record time and the improvements will provide a greater level of flood protection for several communities in the C-4 basin.

**Kissimmee River.** The first major construction phase of Kissimmee River restoration was completed in 2001. Continued scientific monitoring and documentation now provide strong evidence that restoration is, indeed, working and that the ecosystem is on the path to recovery. Restoration success is based on 43 specific indicators that measure changes in biological, chemical, functional and physical characteristics.

Nearly 90,000 acres have already been purchased and more than 11,000 acres of floodplain habitat have been reclaimed. A top District priority is acquiring all of the remaining lands by the end of 2005. Additional restoration-related work is under way in the Upper Chain of Lakes. Construction is set to start the end of this year on another reach of the river; all construction is scheduled to be completed by 2010.

**Lake Okeechobee.** A number of projects in the watershed north of the big lake have been completed, with several others now under way to help reduce phosphorus inputs to the “liquid heart” of South Florida. High water levels and high phosphorus concentrations – the result of tremendous inflows of water from last year’s storms – have impacted both the lake’s ecology and downstream estuaries. Algal blooms have prompted stepped-up monitoring and increased interagency coordination.

Fifteen additional projects are now under construction and are expected to be completed within the next few years. The District created a special Water Resources Advisory Commission sub-committee to help prioritize and implement

Lake Okeechobee “fast-track” projects and to recommend improvements to the current lake water level regulation schedule.

**Everglades Restoration.** To help speed the completion of projects, the District made a bold commitment to accelerate existing work schedules on eight restoration projects. By providing the upfront financing for design and construction through the issuance of Certificates of Participation, we will not have to wait 20 to 30 years before we see results. Announced in October of 2004, we were “turning dirt” on test cell construction just three months later. Visit [www.evergladesnow.org](http://www.evergladesnow.org) to view the latest happenings on this front.

We also organized a national science and engineering-based conference to solicit feedback from the professional community on the identified *Acceler8* projects. In addition, we held a successful construction symposium and exhibition to highlight the business and workforce opportunities created by this expedited initiative.

Needed lands continue to be acquired at an aggressive, though fair, pace. And with the completion of the world’s largest stormwater treatment area, we now have 36,000 acres of constructed wetlands actively working to remove phosphorus from water before it enters the Everglades. Research indicates that wading bird nesting in the Everglades increased by 61 percent in 2004.

Other related projects include completion of the Ten-Mile Creek stormwater treatment area to improve water quality discharges to the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon. We also began work to remove sediment build-up in Lake Trafford.

**Water Supply.** Grant awards totaling \$6 million for 2005 were approved by the Governing Board, giving the go-ahead to 28 alternative water supply projects throughout the District’s 16-county area. Building and operating these projects will collectively create more than 66 million gallons of water a day. The Board also approved \$450,500 in grants to 14 municipalities and nonprofit organizations to help fund water conservation initiatives that will save almost 240 million gallons of water each year.

New legislation passed this year changes the District’s water supply planning process and schedule and will also affect how the District identifies and recommends alternative water supply projects

continued on back

## Putting Your Money to Work

### Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan

- Accelerate project design
- Acquire land
- Begin construction

### District Everglades

- Complete Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs)
- Implement STA enhancements
- Accelerate project construction

### Operations & Maintenance

- Complete hurricane damage repairs
- Continue flood control system upgrades
- Continue invasive plant control

### Water Supply

- Update regional water supply plans
- Implement new legislative mandates
- Adopt “minimum flows & levels” rule

### Lake Okeechobee

- Implement “fast-track” projects
- Continue changes in on-farm practices
- Construct STAs

### Coastal Watersheds

- Partner on stormwater projects
- Implement improvement plans
- Research/complete technical criteria

### Kissimmee Restoration

- Complete land acquisition
- Continue construction
- Continue restoration evaluation

### Land Stewardship

- Construct public access facilities
- Continue exotic plant control
- Continue wetland mitigation

### Regulation

- Implement e-permitting
- Continue Water Use permit renewals
- Applications / inspections / compliance

### Modeling & Scientific Support

- Upgrade water quality network
- Permit compliance monitoring
- Refine modeling protocols/establish library

### Mission Support

- Implement new business systems
- Issue “Certificates of Participation”
- Implement small business program

## How the Budget Stacks Up



Budget year Oct. 1, 2005 – Sept. 30, 2006